

**New North Transportation Alliance (NNTA)
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 12, 2014 8 a.m.
USF Center for Urban Transportation Research**

Attendance

		Alex English	TBARTA
Vicki Ahrens	MOSI	Christina Caputo	TBARTA
Dan Jurman	University Area Community Development Corporation	Jonathan Esteban	James A. Haley Veterans Hospital Florida Hospital Tampa
Katina Kavouklis	Florida Department of Transportation	Michael Gardner Eric Lindstrom	Kittelson & Associates Hillsborough Area Regional Transit
Les Weakland	Hillsborough Area Regional Transit	Barbara Donerly	USF Facilities Planning and Construction
Daniel Rhodes	Hillsborough County Public Works	Sara Hendricks	CUTR, NNTA Co- Director
Charles White	Hillsborough County Public Works	Julie Bond	CUTR, NNTA Co- Director
Raymond Mensah	USF Parking and Transportation Services	Tameika Fraser Jason Jackman	CUTR CUTR, Safe Routes to School
Elizabeth Strom	USF Office of Community Engagement	Brendan Mosher Phil Winters	CUTR, WalkWise CUTR
Nina Mabileau	City of Tampa		

Welcome/Introductions

Barbara Donerly, Chair of the NNTA, welcomed attendees and asked for round robin self-introductions of NNTA members and visitors.

Approval of January Minutes

The January meeting minutes were approved.

Update, Michael Gardner, AVP Facilities and Construction, Florida Hospital Tampa

Mr. Gardner described the progress on the extensive remodeling of the Florida Hospital Tampa campus, located at the corner of Fletcher Avenue and Bruce B. Downs Blvd (BBDB). A new CEO has recently been appointed for this facility. This is the main campus out of a current total of five hospital facilities in the region, with the main entrance to the hospital facing west along BBDB. Mr. Gardner also oversaw the construction of the Wesley Chapel facility, and the same architect is designing this main campus. In the three years since the Adventist System has operated the hospital, approximately \$15 million has been invested in a new air conditioning system for patient rooms, and upgrades to the exterior of the campus, including lighting and exterior windows, to withstand 150 mph wind load for hurricane protection. They plan to add 200 staff positions at the hospital within the next 18 months. There are plans to expand the Pepin Heart facility. In December, the Women's Pavilion Center opened, which is the first phase of hospital remodeling. Mr. Gardner invited NNTA for a site visit to the hospital within a September time frame. The former women's center will become the new emergency room on the first floor, which will open in September. There will be three more floors added to this building that also will

house the new ICU Tower, with the helipad on top. The emergency room will be expandable to 110 beds, with six ambulance bays. An additional 151 non-ICU private hospital beds are also planned. Mr. Gardner used poster boards to point out where the new entrance will be from BBDB. There will be a 40-foot long sign for the emergency room, with a well-lit drive-through. Elsewhere, the Wesley Chapel facility is usually full with plans to expand up to 325 beds. There are plans to expand Connerton long-term care facility by 50 beds and the Carrollwood facility is developing plans to undergo a \$75 million expansion.

Mr. Weakland of HART asked about the hospital's parking problem and what plans they have to connect with alternative transportation services. HART has built new bus bays along BBDB and its new MetroRapid service runs along Fletcher Avenue past the hospital. Mr. Gardner said they have plans to build a new parking garage and relocate an existing parking garage to improve street presence with open parking and landscaping. The hospital has enforcement issues with USF students and Moffitt employees trying to park at Florida Hospital Tampa. Ms. Donerly said that USF is getting ready to start their campus master plan update process and requested information on the number of physicians, nurses, and patients, which was included in the presentation.

Update, Jonathan Esteban, Chief of Transportation, James A. Haley Veterans Hospital

Mr. Esteban described the recent expansion of the hospital to include the opening of a Primary Care Annex in Hidden River on the Hidden River Parkway. This is a \$37 million project on 72 acres with a projected opening in June. All primary care is moving to Hidden River, including mental health and nutrition, as well as administrative offices. The purpose is to make the main VA Hospital a bed-only facility.

The Primary Care Annex parking lot directly in front of the facility will be strictly valet only for patients. At the VA main hospital, to access the valet parking on 131st Avenue, cars line up along the street. Mr. Esteban anticipates a similar long line waiting for valet parking at the Primary Care Annex. They also anticipate employees trying to park in the valet lot. The Primary Care Annex will have one employee-only lot located one parking lot over, which is 497 spaces. It was originally sized for patient use but now Mr. Esteban anticipates there will be more employees than there are parking spaces. Parking is costly at Hidden River. The VA main hospital has three off-site employee parking facilities, from which the employees currently walk to the hospital. Similarly, at the Primary Care Annex, the employees will have to cross the street and he saw no cross walks at Hidden River. They will be walking through another parking lot. Mr. Weakland asked if they have considered an easement for a walkway to more directly connect the remote parking lot to the Primary Care Annex. Mr. Esteban said their engineering department is working on a more direct route. Mr. Weakland suggested that he speak with Barbara Deakin of Hidden River to discuss ADA accessible sidewalks, as the sidewalk system in Hidden River is all privately owned. Mr. Esteban said the VA also is planning to get trams for the employees so that they do not have to walk from the remote lot to the Annex. Two trams are on order now. Each holds 16 people.

The VA also is planning the "Juliet" employee parking lot adjacent to the "Romeo" lot at the corner of BBDB and 131st Avenue. The VA Hospital is also looking into the possibility of another employee-only parking garage off site to consolidate employee parking that is currently spread out amongst several lots.

It is anticipated there will be at least 400 employees and 400 patients making the trip between the VA Hospital and Hidden River daily. They anticipate that most of the patients traveling from the VA Hospital to Hidden River will be in wheelchairs. Mr. Esteban said the VA Hospital has arranged its own shuttle

transportation for these trips. There will be three shuttle buses throughout the day, then a fourth bus early in the morning and again late in the afternoon to handle the extra employee commuter trips. He took a trip around the Primary Care Annex and he observed difficulty with some of the shuttle buses getting in and out. The turning radii that are in Hidden River are not designed for buses.

The VA Hospital wants to work with HART, perhaps with bus passes to help supplement their own transportation service. Mr. Weakland suggested discussing a joint venture on purchase of MetroRapid tickets. There is a MetroRapid stop north of the Primary Care Annex, then further north of that is the Hidden River park and ride facility. Employees could park in the park and ride, then take the MetroRapid westbound to the HART University Area Transfer Center (UATC) that is located close to the VA Hospital. HART has over 300 park and ride spaces.

Mr. Esteban said that he has not seen any analysis done that projects the change in traffic volumes on Fletcher and BBDB as a result of the opening of the Primary Care Annex. There might be a reduction in volumes as a result in people coming from I-75 who work at the Primary Care Annex and who will no longer have to drive along Fletcher. Others may choose to park at Hidden River, then take the VA shuttle or the MetroRapid to the VA main hospital. Mr. Esteban said he also anticipates people are going to want to park at the VA Hospital then ride the shuttle to Hidden River. He said he has observed many people accessing the VA Hospital from I-275 via 131st Avenue and also from Fowler.

Mr. Esteban said their employee vanpool program is strong. He gets a communication usually once a month about a new vanpool forming.

Update, Les Weakland, Project Manager, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority

Mr. Weakland introduced HART's consultant, Eric Lindstrom of Kittelson & Associates, who provided an update on the MetroRapid Bus Rapid Transit Signal Priority Project along Fletcher Avenue. MetroRapid has been in service since June 2013, along Fletcher Avenue to Nebraska Avenue to downtown Tampa. This was a large coordination project among all the major jurisdictions, including FDOT, Hillsborough County, City of Tampa, and the City of Temple Terrace. MetroRapid operates weekdays 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. and is coordinated with HART Route 2 along Nebraska. Frequency of service can be changed based upon ridership levels. They installed fiber optic communications along the entire 17.5-mile corridor. This was a challenge to tie in with City and County traffic signal systems. Traffic signal priority (TSP) can provide an extended green signal or early green signal to a bus that is over three minutes behind schedule. TSP has resulted in 15-20 percent time savings. Mr. Weakland provided a slide presentation showing the different types of MetroRapid bus stops with solar powered features and landscaping. The bus stops were built to tie in with the sidewalk system and are all ADA compliant.

Mr. Lindstrom, Transportation Engineer with Kittelson & Associates, gave a presentation on the implementation of fiber optics along both sections of the corridor. This communication provides the ability for traffic managers to have real time status reports of signal systems, and make timing changes to signals at intersections. This aids traffic flow, bus schedule adherence and reduces wear and tear on buses because they do not have to brake as frequently. It also aids in incident management and fire/rescue dispatch through traffic signal preemption. Construction is now complete. The construction also included signal upgrades at intersections in the City of Tampa and new traffic controllers. There were also improvements at HART operations and on the buses, including automated passenger counters, integrated computer aided dispatch, and automated vehicle location technology. The project resulted in increased through volumes of vehicles and pedestrians and a reduction in travel time, comparing the MetroRapid bus rapid transit against the former local bus service. The system is working

so the next steps are to fine tune the schedule, increase training of bus operators, then fine tune the signal timing.

Nominations for Vice Chair for Next Year

NNTA Vice Chair Dan Jurman announced that prior to our summer recess, we would like to take nominations for the next new Vice Chair of NNTA when Dan steps up as Chair. Putting a new Vice Chair in place this Spring will give the new Board Executive Committee time over the summer to think about the vision and direction for 2015. We are specifically looking for a public representative to serve as Vice Chair next year, since Dan is a private sector representative. You can email Sara Hendricks at Hendricks@cutr.usf.edu with your nomination or self-nomination.

Sara said that the remaining NNTA meetings for the year will be in May, September and November. She also suggested two presentations for the May meeting, a presentation by Elba Lopez of FDOT on a regional bicycle and pedestrian study and a presentation by a PSTA representative on Greenlight Pinellas. Nina Mabileau offered to give an update on the widening of Cross Creek Blvd., between Cory Lake Isle and Morris Bridge Road, to four lanes. The City of Tampa will go to construction within the next 60 days.

Next Meeting

The next NNTA meeting will be Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at CUTR.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 a.m.